

Dundee City Council
for the Dundee Partnership

A Step Change in Improvement of Employability Outcomes in Dundee Project



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Executive Summary

In this Interim Report we describe:

- The policy and socio-economic context for the development of an enhanced employability approach in Dundee
- How outcomes can be improved by:
 - Reframing of the ‘Dundee Pipeline’
 - Putting in place a coherent ‘whole service’ approach to employability
 - Taking practical action in key areas across this service
- The main areas for action by Dundee City Council and its partners.

At this stage we are looking for an ‘in principle’ commitment to the approach described here which we have developed in consultation with local partners. This will lead to the final stage of the work which will be to support a series of short life workstreams developing detailed implementation plans for the proposed areas for action, together with any cost implications.

There are six main features of a new approach to employability in Dundee which will lead to improved outcomes:

- Creating a coherent design for a city wide ‘**Dundee Employability Service**’ which incorporates the services of all organisations and providers and assesses performance on both the outcomes achieved and the experience of both the employer and the individual client. This will provide the partners with a way of pinpointing the interventions needed to improve performance. The premise behind this service design is that all the partners in Dundee need to work closely together to create a coherent and progressive service which understands and responds to the needs of each individual client and to the needs of employers. One of the ways of helping partners assess the coherence and performance of this all-organisation service will be to collect and analyse regular feedback from both employers and individual clients.
- We have placed a **detailed understanding of the labour market** at the heart of this new design. This will draw on both current data and a wide range of existing engagements with employers. There will be a shared interpretation of this information and an understanding of the main areas of demand will infuse every part of the service and so contribute to better decision making by school pupils and those seeking work, an improved match between training and employer needs, and a better match of recruits with vacancies.
- Reframing the current ‘**Dundee Pipeline**’ from being mainly a way of contracting and monitoring a part of employability resources in Dundee (DCC/ESF funding) to being a framework for all employability resources. This will provide the Local Employability Partnership (Employability Group) with a practical way of understanding:
 - The current array of services and resources, how well they complement each other and where the gaps and overlaps are
 - Where each provider and their services fits in and who they need to relate to perform effectively
 - What the current resource distribution is like and how this may need to change

- Where the strong and weak points are in terms of performance and what needs to change to improve performance.
- Focusing the Employability Group on the **active management of the performance of the whole service**. All the main agencies and providers will report on their performance to this group in an open and transparent way, highlighting areas of good and weaker performance. The partners will work together to identify actions to respond to areas of weaker performance, responsibility for action and how they will assess whether the response has produced the required improvement.
- Ensuring that **the actions of each partner on service design, delivery and commissioning are carried out collaboratively** to ensure that individual services make up a comprehensive and coherent whole.
- Creating a shared **Dundee wide approach to the development of a wide range of work experience and job placements** which provide either destinations or stepping stones to permanent jobs for those seeking work.

Dundee is not starting from scratch – we have identified a wide range of good practice and some of the actions we recommend are about learning from these and scaling them up or transferring them elsewhere.

Within the proposed service we have identified 15 areas for action and we describe these in this report. These actions can be summarised as follows:

- Improving the **understanding of the current and emerging labour market** and infusing all parts of the employability service with this shared source of reliable insight and intelligence. This will combine existing data sources with a wide range of insights drawn from those working with employers across Dundee, mainly through an annual workshop of all relevant staff. This should lead to:
 - Improved decision making by pupils
 - Improved match between advice/training and the market
 - Improved match between recruits and employer needs
 - Employers more confident of finding the right staff – more jobs?
 - Greater likelihood of sustainability in work
- Creating a **‘whole service’ focus in terms of performance management**. The Employability Group will be supported in its performance management role by regular independent telephone surveys of employers and individual clients to gain feedback on their experience of the service.

For employers this will explore:

- The quality and responsiveness of service
- The quality and match of recruits
- Any scope for improvement.

For individual clients this will explore:

- The quality and responsiveness of service – did it understand and respond to your specific situation and needs?
 - The extent to which a clear pathway for progress was developed and agreed?
 - The extent to which clients felt in charge of their progress?
 - The extent to which they have had the support they needed along the way?
 - Have they gained a job and to what extent does it match their skills and aspirations?
- Recognise the **significance of micro businesses** (employing less than 10) by:
 - Increasing the investment in HR support for micro-businesses to help them realise job creation potential and growth
 - Piloting a micro-business academy with FSB/members to help clients gain the distinctive skills and behaviours that will help them thrive in a micro-business and contribute effectively:
 - Reliability
 - Team-work
 - Appreciation of demands on business leader
 - Flexibility and responsiveness
 - Range of skills.
 - Working with the FSB to help micro business owners further strengthen their management skills with the aim of enhancing business performance.
 - Exploring ways of helping micro businesses to engage with schools to promote the value of enterprise and the appeal of working in a smaller business – and the skills required to thrive in this employment.
 - **Strengthening the match between recruits and employer demand** by
 - Building on academy approach and good practice in Dundee:
 - Coordinating academy approaches
 - Creating a strong ‘Dundee approach’ to academy design, delivery and performance through co-design with employers and the regular review and adoption of learning to ensure a best practice model.
 - Pioneering an independent ‘graduate school’ which takes all work ready clients and tests for ‘job readiness’ to refine the match between recruits and the needs of employers:
 - Those graduating can be confidently recommended to employers
 - Those not graduating will receive detailed, supportive feedback and personalised development.

- **Supporting progress in work** by the creation of a career advancement service and by working with businesses in key sectors to improved productivity and skills, so providing opportunities for progression to more secure and higher paying jobs.
- Ensuring a **strongly targeted approach** – at those individuals most vulnerable to long term employment and those areas which have the highest unemployment – by clear and agreed targeting of support:
 - Improving the coordination of Stage 1/2 services in areas of highest unemployment
 - Building on current joint asset-based training to create a shared team approach across local services
 - Targeting clients based on risk assessment – those particularly vulnerable to long term unemployment or at risk of losing their job.
- Ensuring the **availability and quality of front line support** by
 - Developing a partnership approach to front line staff training as a long term investment
 - Exploring the scope to build on current volunteering approaches.
- Enhancing service quality and relevance through **designing approaches with clients**. This will ensure that the client voice is significant in the design and delivery of services:
 - It will build on – and form an integral part of – the asset-based approach
 - It will apply to the service as a whole, individual services within it and engagement with each client
 - It will be built into joint staff development
- Encourage more effective approaches to design and delivery by creating an innovation fund, with an open brief – attracting bids for ‘something worth trying’ that builds on evidence and may **deliver more sustainable, better (higher paid, more skilled), quicker outcomes**.

The approach has important practical implications for Dundee City Council in terms of:

- Its strategic leadership role and how this can be focused and directed for greatest impact
- Its role as employer, commissioner and provider of key services, to maximise its own impact on employability
- Its role as a contributor to the creation of an infrastructure for service delivery that can encourage and support the integration of services around the needs of individuals, families and neighbourhoods.

At this stage the commitment in principle is sought to this highly collaborative approach. This will provide the basis for more detailed collaborative design work to take forward the implementation of the approach through joint work teams. These teams will develop both the detailed plans for implementation and any cost implications together with the cost benefits over time.

Having developed an approach to the functions and focus of the service the next stage will also include developing the options for practical delivery on the ground in terms of the most appropriate physical infrastructure and governance model.

1 Context and background

In this section we summarise the policy and socio-economic context for a new approach to employability in Dundee.

The policy and programme context

The approach taken by the partners in Dundee needs to take account of the changing policy and programme context. The main features of this are:

- Welfare reform, which involves a range of changes to welfare status, eligibility and funding, together with the introduction of Universal Credit.
- The devolution to the Scottish Government of DWP's Work Programme for long term unemployed people and Work Choices for those with disabilities and the Scottish Government's proposed 'Scottish Approach' in response to this.
- The response by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to the need to find between 25% and 40% of funding reductions in the current funding review.
- Related to this, the financial constraints on the other public partners, including the City Council.
- The implementation of the recommendations of the Wood Commission following the publication of Developing the Young Workforce, the Scottish Government's response to the Wood Commission's Report.

Welfare reform

- For many on benefits there has been a reduction in income - and for many of these the reductions will get larger. For those who are unemployed, the largest reductions in income focus on those with disabilities or with large families. But for many others affected by smaller reductions the aggregate effect may create a much wider problem of indebtedness and it is this broader impact that will have the greatest effect on the city. For those in work the reductions in working tax credits together with the increase in the proportion of low paid and zero hours contracts mean that gaining work may no longer provide a route out of poverty, so progression in work to higher paid jobs (and/or more hours) is becoming increasingly important.
- Universal Credit combines a number of benefits into one payment that will vary by income for those who are in employment – as advised by employers. It reduces the marginal tax rates that apply as income increases and is therefore aimed at helping to smooth the path to work. In other words it should increase the likelihood that increasing work income will more than replace reducing benefit income. In addition the whole payment (eg including housing benefit) is made to a nominated member of a household so there is a greater requirement for effective budgeting by households – the aim being to help households develop the practices they will need to have in place when they are being paid in employment.

Universal Credit in Dundee is being applied currently to the simplest cases and is using a parallel software system to that which will manage Universal Credit for all in due course. Although the UK Government has re-committed to the introduction of Universal Credit there remain some doubts about whether it will be possible to introduce the complex software required to deal with more typical households and its live information requirements.

There are a number of practical implications of these changes that need to be considered:

- Many of those on benefits (in and out of work) are facing reductions in income. This is likely to lead to increased demands on support services and may be related to a need either to get a job or, for those in work, to increase hours or make progress to better paid jobs. For others it could be about money management and debt advice. There is a clear risk that the reductions will lead to increased household stresses if it does not prove possible to reduce costs (eg by moving to a smaller home) or increase income (eg by gaining a job or working more hours).
- The DWP stresses the significance of the array of welfare reforms in encouraging new forms of behaviour. However, the opportunity for the changes to become reflected in 'behaviour change' may be challenged by the both the skill levels of claimants and the quantity and range of jobs on the market.

Devolution of Work Programme and Work Choice

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on the best way of responding to the opportunity of designing and procuring a 'Scottish approach' to Work Programme (WP) and Work Choice. The consultation document makes clear that the Scottish Government sees this next step of devolution as an opportunity to explore how WP and Work Choice can fit into and complement wider employability support.

Work Programme is important because it is the main source of support for long term unemployed people. This client group was traditionally the main focus for action by local authorities and their partners, and the introduction of what has become a very separate and distinct service has left partnerships struggling in terms of an appropriate focus, given that most shorter term unemployed people find work with relatively little support.

Elsewhere in the UK, cities and regions have been considering how they can add value to WP – with the consensus being that it is quite hard to make a significant difference to those on Job Seeker's Allowance on WP where performance is at least as good as previous national programmes for this group. It would be much easier to make a difference to WP clients on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) by integrating the support with the wider array of support available for those who are ill or disabled. However, the evidence suggests that the distinction between the needs of JSA and ESA clients is not clear cut and any distinction in service may need to rely on a more sophisticated assessment of individual needs. However, a number of partnerships, for example, The North East Combined Authority, have recently made the case to the Treasury and DWP for the devolution of 'ESA WP2' on the basis of embedding it in a locally managed partnership service.

The ‘Scottish Approach’ to WP is likely to involve a greater integration of this national service into local partnership action. This does not mean that it will be locally procured – procurement is likely to be at a national or multi-regional basis – but the approach in Dundee needs to be able to include WP delivery as part of a wider collaborative service with the aim of enhancing performance – particularly for those furthest from work.

Although the WP is a significant programme and it focuses on a priority client group it is by no means dominant in terms of its funding – if Further Education spend is included, WP accounts for 7% of total spend on employability, which reinforces the need for it to be more fully integrated into a wider service.

The Scottish Government see a more coherent and distinctive ‘Scottish Approach’ as having six features:

- A focus on those furthest from work
- An emphasis on the quality of jobs (eg a bonus for placement in Fair Work may be a possibility) and on progression in work (eg to Fair Work or higher qualifications and responsibility/pay)
- A shift to prevention
- A shared monitoring system – able to review and share performance, lessons and outcomes/cost
- Strengthened links between economic development, employability and skills
- A sustained shift in school/employment connections as part of a much greater exposure of pupils to the ‘world of work’.

Reductions in DWP budgets

The DWP is among the ‘unprotected’ Departments that are being required to identify cuts in spending of between 25% and 40% as part of the current UK Spending Review. In terms of Work Programme and Work Choice it is almost certain that they will face at least a 25% reduction in budget so part of the Scottish approach needs to be about how to enhance performance – particularly for those furthest for work – with reduced spend.

To respond to the required spending cuts DWP are carrying out a fundamental review of how their spend aligns with that of others and they are developing a strong focus on joint working with others who engage with those who are unemployed. There is a particular focus for this around the joining up of support for unemployed people with disabilities and the health at work agenda (helped in England by the creation of Public Health England but there is no equivalent to this in Scotland). The purpose of this work is both to tackle the ‘gap’ between work placements for people with disabilities and that for other clients (the former have a placement rate which is half that for other clients), and reducing the drop out from jobs of those who face health issues – in terms of both physical and mental health. This creates an opportunity for new kinds of ways for JCP to work with partner organisations. Although this also means that there is a strengthening focus on reducing benefit payments (rather than necessarily finding people work) this creates some opportunities for some radical cost benefit based approaches to how JCP staff carry out their work (eg could they become part of the ‘asset based’ approach?), how they can intervene earlier with those at risk of long term unemployment, and how they can

contribute to approaches that reduce in work tax credits by supporting progression in work.

These budget cuts will drive accommodation savings on the JCP estate and this may create an opportunity in Dundee for collocating Jobcentre Plus alongside a range of related services.

Financial constraints on the wider partnership

All the partners engaged in the employability agenda will see reductions in their budget for the foreseeable future. This will drive the search for new and more effective ways of providing services and support, aligning budgets and services around the needs of individuals, families and communities, and rationalising the physical infrastructure.

Developing the Young Workforce

The implementation of the Wood Commission report is putting in place a set of actions and processes to help young people make a more successful transition to work and subsequently make progress in work. The industry led Dundee and Angus Regional Invest in Youth Group has now been created which is leading the implementation of the recommended actions which include a range of actions to break down the distance between school and the world of work, including for example the creation of long term working relationships between schools and employers.

This significant effort – backed by Scottish Government resources – needs to be an integral part of any wider employability approach in Dundee. Some feel that the focus on investing in young people has gone too far at the expense of – for example – the growing problem of older unemployed people. Cambridge Policy Consultants have pointed out that young people form one quarter of the unemployed but attract over half the total spend on employability support.

The Dundee approach needs to recognise and support the significance of this focused effort on young people and ensure that some of its most important features (for example, the quality of labour market intelligence) clearly complement this work.

Summary

The main practical implications for Dundee of the policy context and trends are:

- The need to develop practical ways of managing the performance of the whole employability service in Dundee – and ensuring that this can include Work Programme 2 in a much more integrated way.
- The need to develop a physical infrastructure for the service which allows Dundee to be at the forefront of the growing emphasis on service integration around client needs – and on the alignment of budgets to deliver a progressive pathway for each client.

- In particular there is a strong trend in the alignment of services at a neighbourhood level around the needs of those clients furthest from work – services which include housing, health, social care and parents’ engagement with schools.
- The strengthening focus on progression in work and on the value of ‘Fair Work’ requires a two pronged effort: the creation of a service to help people to make progress in work, and a business development effort which helps key sectors enhance productivity and competitiveness through skills development.

The socio-economic context

The main features and trends that are relevant to the development of an enhanced employability effort in Dundee are:

- Dundee’s population is forecast to **grow significantly faster** than Scotland’s over the next 25 years. Currently Dundee’s demographic profile shows that it has more young people, fewer older people and a higher proportion of working age people when compared with Scotland. Over the next 25 years, the proportion of those of working age is expected to decline but not as fast as the forecast Scottish decline, with a significant gap emerging towards the end of the period.
- Unemployment has for a long time been **significantly higher than in Scotland** as a whole. The gap between Dundee City and Scotland has grown over the last three years, although over the past year there has been a considerable fall in the unemployment rate in Dundee. The annual population survey Jan2014-Dec2014 shows an unemployment rate of 7% in Dundee, compared with 5% in Scotland. Economic inactivity is also higher in Dundee, with 31% of the working age population being economically inactive, compared to 23% in Scotland.
- In both Dundee and across Scotland, the **largest group of benefit claimants is the ESA and Incapacity Benefits group**, which comprises almost 10% of the working age population in Dundee. Figure 1 overleaf shows that this group is much larger than the JSA group and provides a greater challenge in terms of the array of support needed and, often, the length of time over which support is needed to take people into secure work.



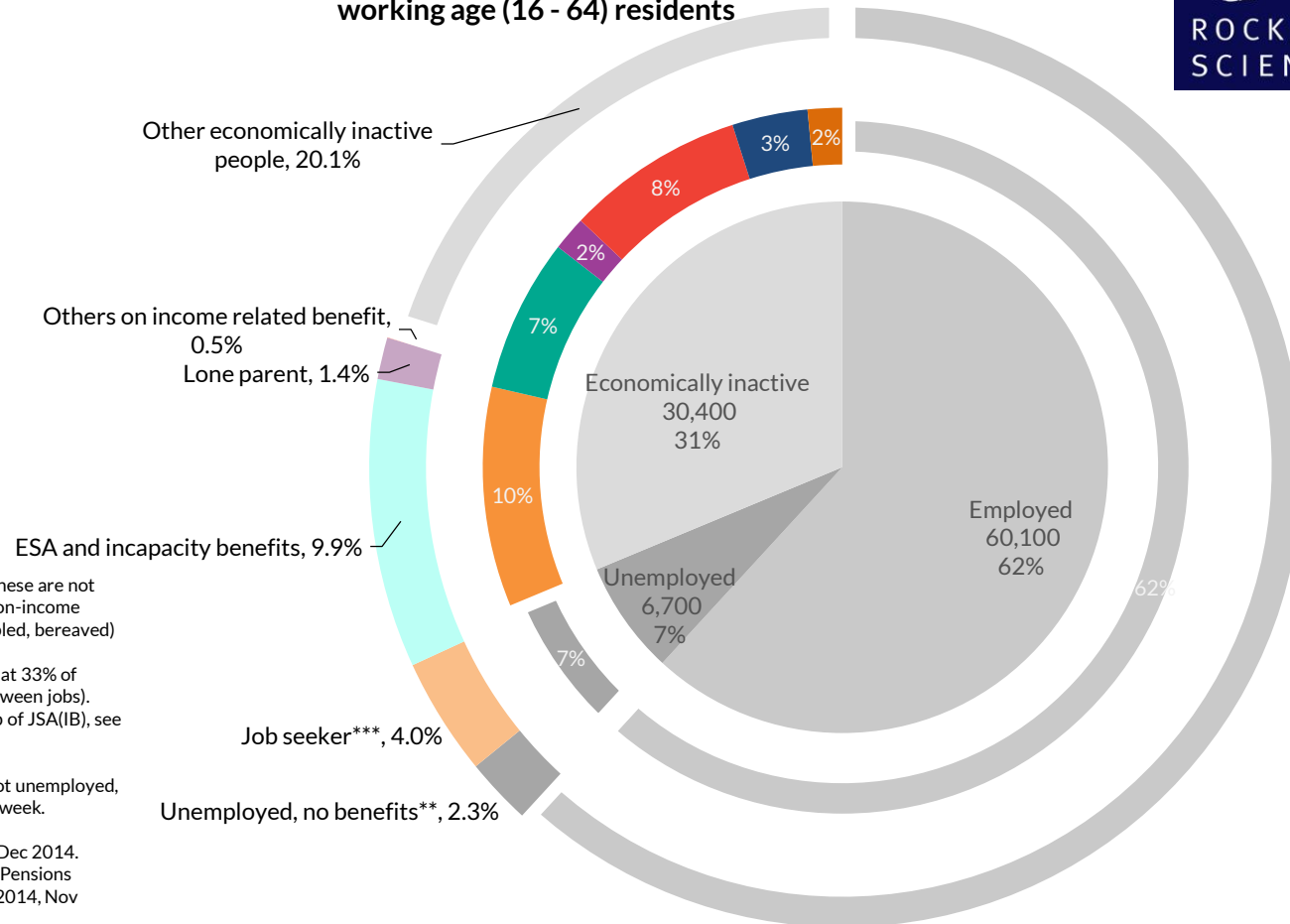
Dundee City

Economic activity and out of work benefits among working age (16 - 64) residents

Reasons for Economic Inactivity:

- Student
- Looking after family / home
- Temporary sick
- Long term sick
- Retired
- Other *

DWP Working Age Client Statistical Typologies



*Other economically inactive people: most of these are not claiming benefits but includes some claiming non-income related benefits or other benefits (carers, disabled, bereaved)

** This figure is based on a UK wide estimate that 33% of unemployed are not claiming benefits (eg if between jobs). Based on 2009/10 national estimate of take-up of JSA(IB), see <https://goo.gl/e6dj2t>

*** This figure includes some people who are not unemployed, but working on average less than 16 hours per week.

Sources: Annual Population Survey, Jan 2014-Dec 2014. Averaged quarterly data from DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, Feb 2014, May 2014, Aug 2014, Nov 2014.

More information about statistical groups is found here:

Figure 1: Profile of unemployed and inactive people in Dundee. [Source: National data sources as set out: presentation by Rocket Science]

- The JSA group is quite dynamic. With roughly 3,500 registered as unemployed in September 2015, there are approximately 600 people who started a new period of claiming JSA (either claiming for the first time or a repeat claimant), comprising nearly one-fifth of the total claimant count in that month, compared with 765 flowing off the register.
- The over 50s age band does not show such a marked decrease in the number of claimants over the last two years and it is the scale of long term unemployed people (particularly men) which displays the largest gap between Dundee and Scotland (see Figure 2 below).
- Qualification levels in the older working-age population in Dundee are lower than those in Scotland overall. Combined with the high levels of long term unemployment in the older population in Dundee, this could be an indication that older people who find themselves out of work are struggling to get work due to a lack of the appropriate skills.

Sex	Claim duration	Age			
		Aged 16-64	Aged 16-24	Aged 25-49	Aged 50-64
Total	Total	1.46	1.10	1.58	1.53
Total	Up to 6 months	1.27	0.96	1.31	1.11
Total	Over 6 months and up to a year	1.67	1.25	1.25	2.00
Total	Over 1 year	2.00	1.67	2.14	2.00
Male	Total	1.53	1.12	1.58	1.74
Male	Up to 6 months	1.29	0.97	1.35	1.33
Male	Over 6 months and up to a year	1.20	1.33	1.40	1.67
Male	Over 1 year	2.25	1.60	2.20	2.38
Female	Total	1.27	1.11	1.38	1.20
Female	Up to 6 months	1.22	1.00	1.10	0.83
Female	Over 6 months and up to a year	1.50	1.00	1.50	2.00
Female	Over 1 year	1.67	1.50	1.75	1.33

Figure 2: Comparison of the rate of population claiming in Dundee and Scotland, March 2015. Each number represents (Rate of claimants in Dundee / Rate of claimants in Scotland). Density of colour represents scale of difference. [Source: NOMIS Claimant Count – Age Duration with Proportions]

- School leavers' destinations in the Dundee City Council area in 2013/14 are presented in Figure 3 overleaf. In 2013/14 there were 1331 leavers. 36.7% of these went to Further Education, compared to the figure of 26.1% across the rest of Scotland. This is a reflection of the lack of jobs for young people and means that school leavers in Dundee City Council area were 1.4 times more likely to go into Further Education than other areas in Scotland. Only East Ayrshire had a higher proportion of school leavers going to Further Education. On the whole the areas where jobs are hardest to find have the highest proportion of pupils going on to FE.
- Dundee City Council also had the third highest rate of school leavers going into the "Unemployed not seeking" category, with this outcome 1.8 times more likely in Dundee than in the rest of Scotland – but these numbers are small (25 school leavers).

- Skills Development Scotland provides a detailed analysis of the profile of school leavers in their Dundee Community Planning Partnership report¹. Key points from that analysis are:
 - The proportion of school leavers going into the unemployed seeking group (6.5%), while still 0.2 percentage points higher than Scotland, is the lowest it has ever been in Dundee and down from 15.3% in 2009/10.
 - Positive destination rates are strongly related to the level of deprivation in the areas where school leavers' live.
 - Positive destination rates are strongly related to the school that leavers attend, with Grove Academy having a positive destination rate of 95/2% and Baldrigon Academy only 86.0%.

	Dundee City Council		Rest of Scotland	Dundee City Council Rate / Rest of Scotland Rate *
HE	428	32.2%	38.8%	0.83
FE	488	36.7%	26.1%	1.41
Training	68	5.1%	4.1%	1.25
Employment	220	16.5%	21.8%	0.76
Voluntary Work	7	0.5%	0.4%	1.14
Activity Agreements	4	0.3%	1.1%	0.26
Unemployed seeking	87	6.5%	6.3%	1.04
Unemployed not seeking	25	1.9%	1.1%	1.76
Not known	4	0.3%	0.3%	1.05

Total Leavers 1331

Source: School Leaver Destinations Initial Follow Up Summary Table 2013-14, Skills Development Scotland.

*This represents a "relative risk"-type statistic (eg, see [1]). A number of 2.0 for HE would mean that school leavers in this LA area are twice as likely to go into Higher Education as they are in Scotland overall.

[1] http://www2.law.columbia.edu/fagan/courses/law_socialscience/documents/Spring_2006/Class%207-Sampling/Liberman_probability.pdf

Figure 3: School leaver destinations in Dundee compared to the rest of Scotland [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Skills Development Scotland data].

Employment

The Dundee Partnership Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2013-17 makes a number of key observations about the “demand side” of employability in Dundee. These are updated and expanded upon in Figure 4 overleaf.

¹ Skills Development Scotland, Dundee City Council, Community Planning Partnership Report, December 2014

Key Observation (2011 data)	Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Trend	Updated Observation (Latest Data)	Source
Falling number of jobs overall	Volume of jobs (employees)	75,600	73,300	72,000	71,400	71,800			Decline halted with steady number of jobs over 2011-2013.	[1]
High dependency on public sector	Proportion of employees in private sector	33.4%	35.4%	33.7%	33.2%	32.5%			Still high dependency on public sector, but reduc	[1]
Major sectors are health, retail, education and public administration, with manufacturing continuing to decline from a historically high base.	Volume of jobs (employees)								[Not updated - requires restricted BRES access]	[1]
Growing number of enterprises but falling employment in growth sectors. Tourism and financial and business services dominate growth sectors -	Number of enterprises		990	985	1030	1055	1145		Number of enterprises continuing to rise, but all of this due to rise of enterprises with zero employees or 1-49 employees. There are now fewer big employers (250+) in the growth sectors.	[2]
	Employment	15000	12700	11900	12100				Falling employment in growth sectors (including in the key tourism and financial & business services sectors)	[2]
High and increasing employment in knowledge-intensive industries	% of employee jobs in knowledge intensive industries	48.3%		49.4%					[Not updated - requires restricted BRES access]	[1]
Slower business growth rate relative to Scotland	Number of active enterprises	325	345	335	400	515			Large recent increase in the number of active enterprises	[3]
Low business density per head	Number of businesses per adult (16-64)	26.1	27.0	26.0	26.8	27.7			Number of businesses per 1000 adults remains below Scotland (36.7 in 2013)	[3];[4]
Low business start up rate per head, with no growth in this trend	Number of business births per head	2.67	2.83	2.71	3.23	4.14			Recent growth in the business start ups per 1000 adults, although still slightly below Scotland (4.9 in 2013)	[3];[4]
Modestly positive business churn rate (1.1%) but lower than Scotland	Business churn rate ((births-deaths)/stock)	0.2%	-0.8%	1.1%	0.9%	5.2%			Churn rate now higher than Scotland (4.1% in 2013)	[3]
Slightly lower business 3 year survival rate than Scotland	3 year survival rate			58.5%	53.8%	55.1%			Business survival rates fallen slightly and still below Scotland	[3]

Figure 4: Key features and trends in Dundee employment [Source: Dundee Partnership Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2013-17 updated and expanded by Rocket Science]

The longer term pattern of employment change is presented in Figure 5 overleaf. There are three notable features of Figure 5:

- The sustained decline of the manufacturing sector by c10,000 jobs since 1990.
- This has been more than compensated for (in numbers, though not in the type of work or employee) by the growth in public sector employment (which includes DCC, NHS and the FE and HE sectors) which is now at an historic high, following a minimum in 1999.
- Unemployment is significantly lower than during the 1990s, though much higher than in the period before 2008. In the late 1990s many were encouraged to move to incapacity benefit and it is clear from a range of anecdotes that some of these people have remained on IB since. This policy of reducing unemployment figures in this way is in contrast to the current policy in a very different unemployment context where through Work Capability Assessments those on IB are being encouraged to become actively work seeking on JSA.

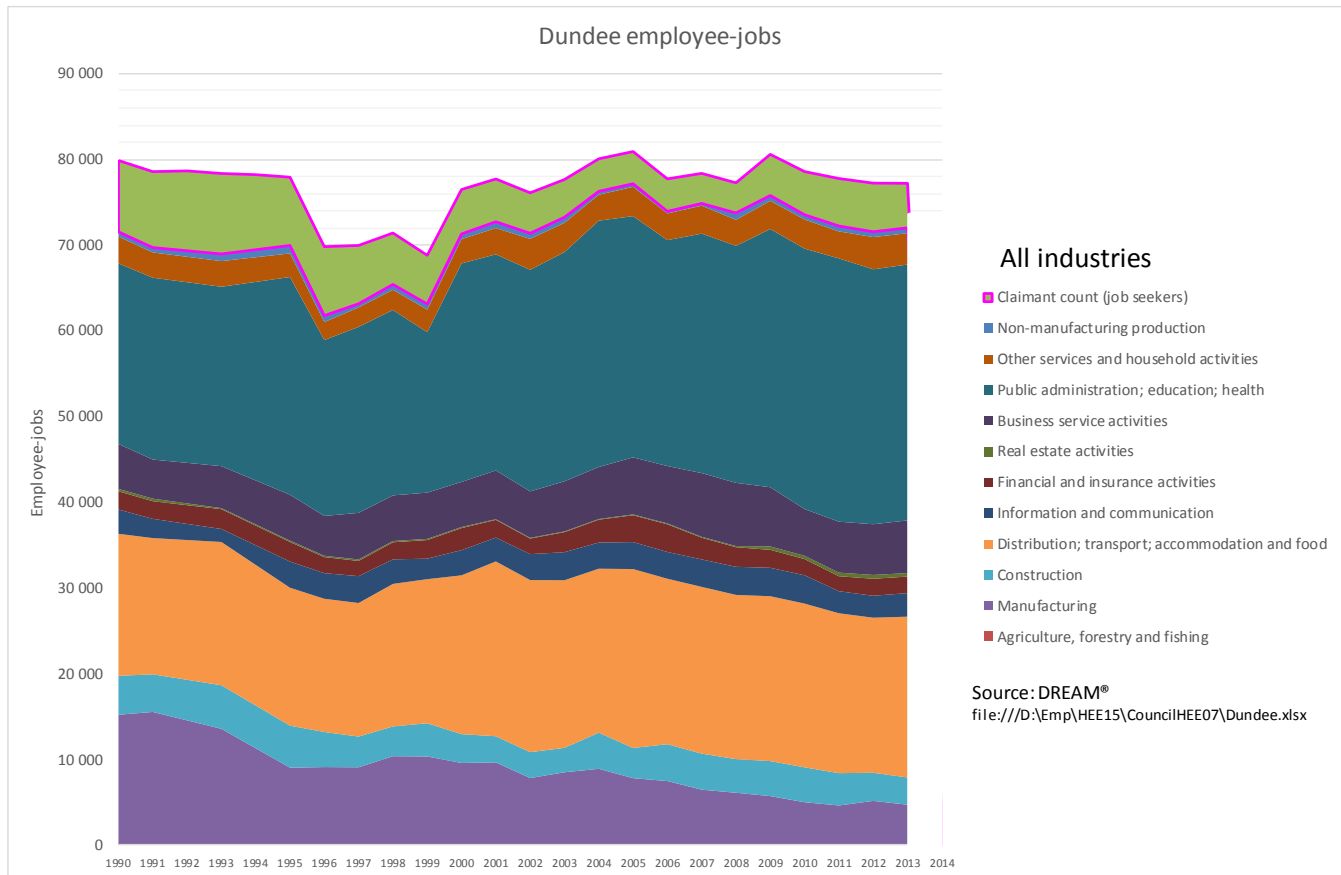


Figure 5: Dundee employment trends 1990 – 2014 by sector [Source: Cogentsi, DREAM model]

- Skills Development Scotland’s 2014 Regional Skills Assessment found that 23% of establishments in Tayside had skills gaps, compared to 19% across Scotland. Tayside employers reported that new recruits including school leavers, college leavers and university graduates were generally well or very well prepared for work, although less well prepared for work than average for employers in Scotland.²
- The largest skills gaps by occupation in Tayside, as identified by the Regional Skills Assessment, are for process and machine operatives (14% of all in employment have a skills gap) and caring, leisure and other service occupations (12% of all in employment have a skills gap). For both these occupational classifications, the skills gap in Tayside is around twice the national skills gap.
- In Scotland there are 3.9 unemployed people for every job vacancy. In Tayside, this jobs gap is slightly higher at 4.5 unemployed people for every job vacancy. Although there is a jobs gap in Tayside and across Scotland, there is an additional challenge for getting people into employment, namely skills shortages preventing job vacancies from being filled.

² Regional Skills Assessment for Tayside, Nov 2014, quoting UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2013

- In Tayside, there are two employment types with a particularly high level of vacancies – machine operatives and skilled trade’s occupations. For both types of employment, over a quarter of the vacancies are deemed to be unfilled due to a skills shortage. While half of the manager position vacancies are deemed to be due to skills shortages, these vacancies comprise a small proportion (less than 1%) of the optimal employment in this sector. There are notably fewer vacancies for “professionals” and “caring, leisure and other services staff” in Tayside compared to Scotland.

Summary

The situation described in these statistics has some important features:

- Unemployment remains stubbornly high in Dundee compared with Scotland. This applies across the age groups. The gap with Scotland widens with duration of unemployment and is at its widest for long term unemployed men over 50.
- In part this is a reflection of the changing employment structure of Dundee, in particular with a sustained long term decline in manufacturing jobs, and some clear echoes from the period of particularly high unemployment in the late 1990s.
- While the on flows and off flows in the labour market show considerable dynamism, there is evidence of a ‘jobs gaps’ – in other words there is a mismatch between those seeking work and the numbers and types of jobs available. This may have implications for the job search area of young people.
- Overall, the unemployed client group is further from work than in many other areas, and this has significant implications for the design and focus of a local employability service, and for the need to integrate or at least align Work Programme 2 after its introduction in April 2017.

The implications of this are:

- There is a need to maximise the creation of jobs and the filling of vacancies by ensuring a high quality match between the skills and aptitudes of recruits and the needs of employers.
- The main issue for Dundee is about those on ESA rather than JSA (most of whom find work of their own accord) – and for those not in work who are at risk of long term unemployment. There is therefore need to develop more effective integrated support for those on ESA – and to develop a much stronger ‘risk based’ focus for those on JSA – in terms of targeting those at risk of becoming longer term unemployed, and intervening as early as possible.
- There is a need to ensure the greatest return from the significant local investment in employability services by ensuring both that they are closely aligned with an agreed service design – and that the performance of the whole service is actively managed and improved by the partners.

- Given the scale of those furthest from work and requiring intensive support, there is a need to transform the scale of one to one services – particularly in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The only way of doing this on the required scale will be through the recruitment and training of community members in a collaborative effort to create better futures for those who can aspire to work.

2 Reframing the ‘Dundee Pipeline’

The idea of a strategic skills pipeline for each Local Authority area was introduced in the Scottish Governments first employability framework, ‘Workforce Plus’. This introduced the idea of the pipeline as a framework which would allow local partners to:

- Understand the distribution of the services of all partners (public, private, third sector) across the 5 stages locally
- Use this to identify gaps and duplications
- Use this to review the distribution of spend across Stages 1-5 and move towards desired profile
- Actively manage client progress through the stages.

It was therefore intended to be a framework for service positioning, review and management which included all the components of a local employability service.

In Dundee today, the ‘Dundee Pipeline’ refers primarily to the contracting of the DCC/ESF component. Last year spending on this aspect of employability was £400,000 out of an estimated £18m for the pipeline as a whole. The figure of £18m has been roughly estimated by drawing on the recent analysis of Scottish spend on employability and reducing in terms of the working age population of Dundee. Figure 6 below sets out the sources of investment in employability services across Scotland

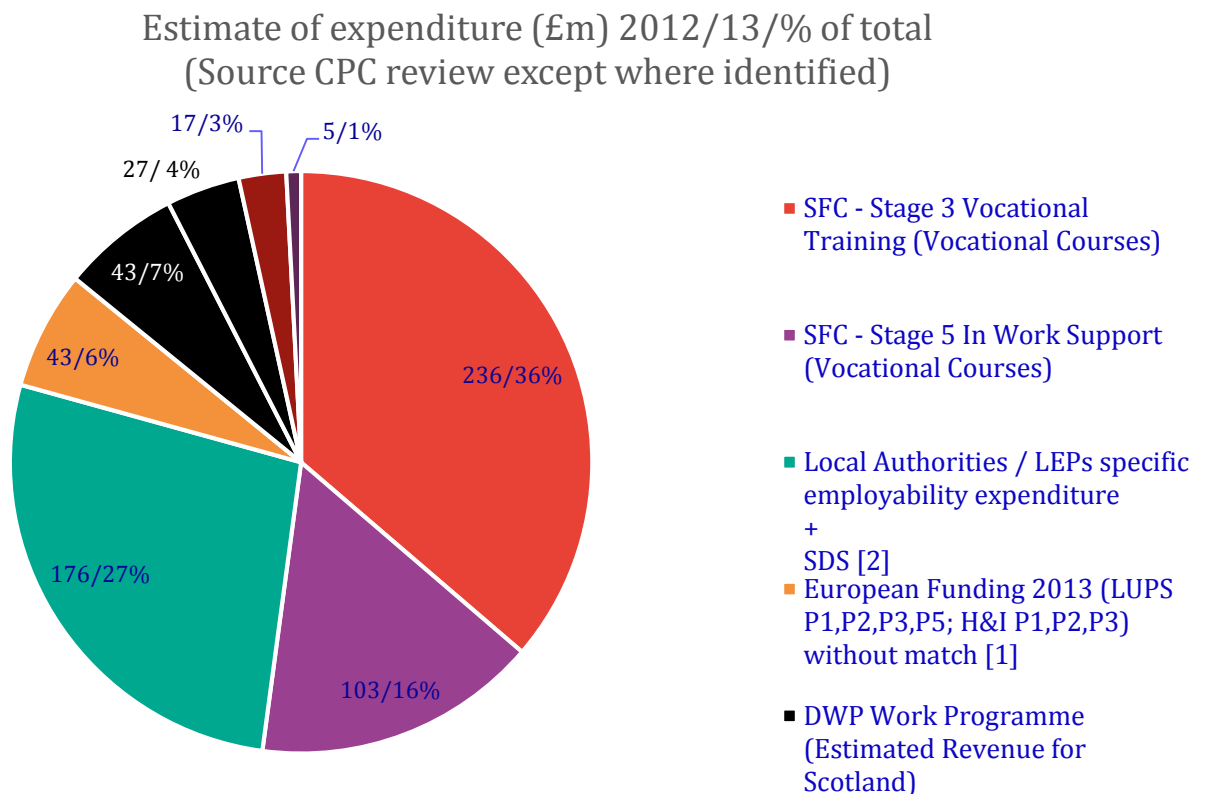


Figure 6: Total annual spend on employability support in Scotland by source [Source: CPC 2014, presentation by Rocket Science]

What Figure 6 makes clear is that there are significant resources for employability – but they are spread across a wide range of roles and functions. In order to create a way of understanding and actively managing the performance of these resources the partners have recognised the need to reframe the Dundee pipeline as a comprehensive pipeline which includes all services for those seeking work.

The comparison between the current situation and the desired future situation in terms of the Dundee pipeline is set out in Figure 7 below.

The Strategic Skills Pipeline

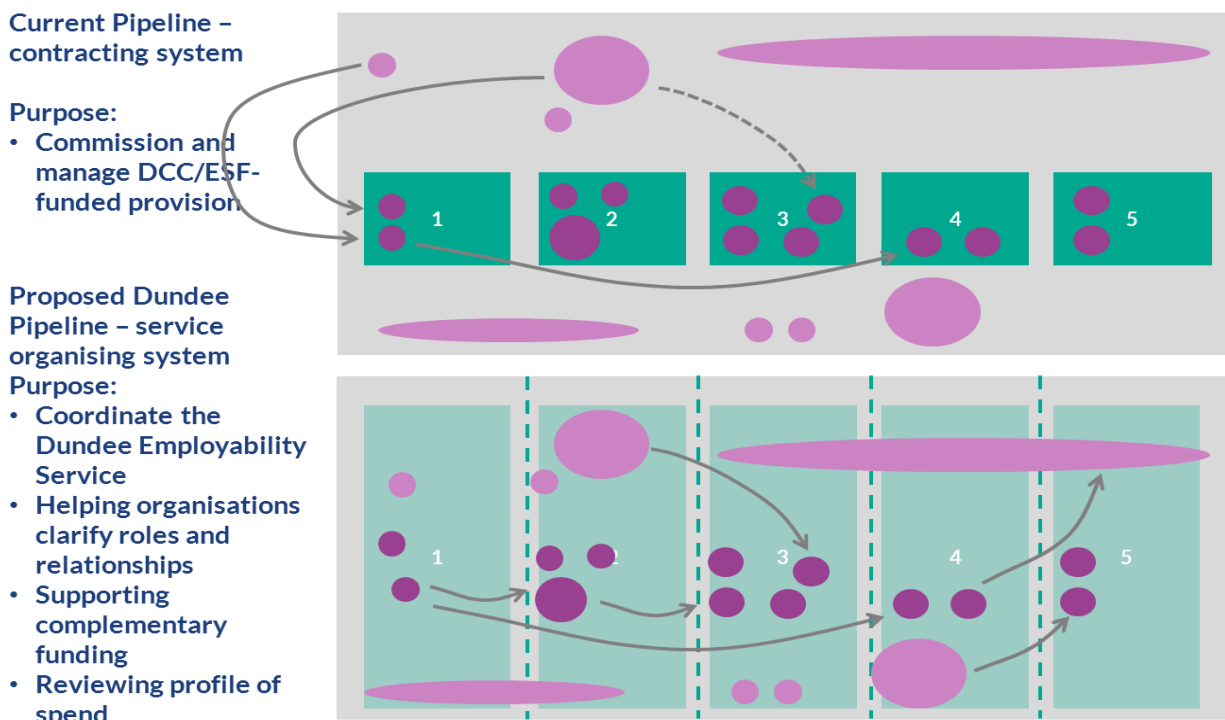


Figure 7: A comparison between the current 'pipeline' (top diagram) with the DCC/ESF funded strand in dark green, and the proposed pipeline including all services for those seeking work [Source: Rocket Science].

The 'Dundee pipeline' therefore becomes a way of organising all services into a coherent model, and can be much more than a way of contracting one funding stream:

- It will help providers to position themselves and understand flow of client into and out of their service and the relationships they need to have with complementary services
- It will provide partners with a way of analysing spend and its distribution and acting on this
- It will provide a framework for active management of the whole service.

3 What works?

We have drawn on the recent work of Cambridge Policy Consultants and our own evaluation work to produce Figure 8 below which summarise the elements of good practice at each stage of the Strategic Skills Pipeline:

Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three	Stage Four	Stage Five
How, not just what, is important	Statistical profiling?	Early use of job search	Reduce use of fiscal incentives for employers	Engagement with employers
Services need to be interesting, not just useful	Payment by outcomes or costs?	Adequate resourcing for job search	Ensure high quality match with each job	Tailored and ongoing work support
Identify early using available information		Longer term training has enduring impacts in the longer term		Particularly effective for those with disabilities and mental health issues
Tailored and responsive		Strong on the job component in training		
Well informed organisations		Market focused training		
Quality of assessment – owned by client		Avoid lock-in		
		Tailored support		

Figure 8: Elements of good practice by pipeline stage [Source: CPC and Rocket Science]

We have drawn on these good practice elements to develop our whole service approach which is described in the next section.

4 Developing a ‘whole service’ approach

Working with the staff of local partners we have developed the design of a ‘Dundee Employability Service’ (Figure 9 overleaf). This has 8 main features:

- It starts and ends with an understanding of the demand for labour. The service is built on the importance of the partners working with employers to ensure that every aspect of the service is infused with high quality insights and intelligence about the current and emerging job market: what employers are looking for and how they are recruiting.
- A high quality employability service can of itself enhance demand: if employers are confident that they can get high quality recruits they will recruit more people. Specifically there is now considerable practical evidence that helping micro-businesses with HR support leads to more recruitment by this important sector of the job market.
- We emphasise the need to have as much as possible ‘close to work’ training co-designed with employers using the ‘academy’ model – with more generic vocational training leading to an independent ‘graduate’ or finishing school which will help clients gain the final skills and approaches they will need to thrive in work.
- The service does not end when clients find work. There is a strong focus on progression in work – to more secure and better paid work. We are proposing that this includes both a ‘career enhancement service’ and a business development effort in key employment sectors to promote progression through enhancing business productivity and competitiveness
- Stage 1 (outreach and engagement) and Stage 2 (support and progress management) involve a wide range of community based services. These take an asset based approach (that is, working with clients to identify and build on existing strengths to promote motivation and a sense of empowerment).
- The quality, responsiveness and impact of the service will be captured in a range of ways – but one of the most important will be regular feedback from both employers and clients. It is important to note that this feedback will be about their experience of the service as a whole not of one particular provider. This will be a strong driver of more coherent and collaborative behaviours.
- There is an emphasis on the skills of front line staff. All the evaluations of major employability programmes highlight the significance of personal advisers and stress the importance of having experienced and effective staff in these roles. The partners will therefore develop a focus on the appointment and development of high quality front line staff and their effective support.
- Finally, all the partners will take a co-commissioning approach to the design and delivery of their services – and where services are contracted they will make sure that they complement existing services.

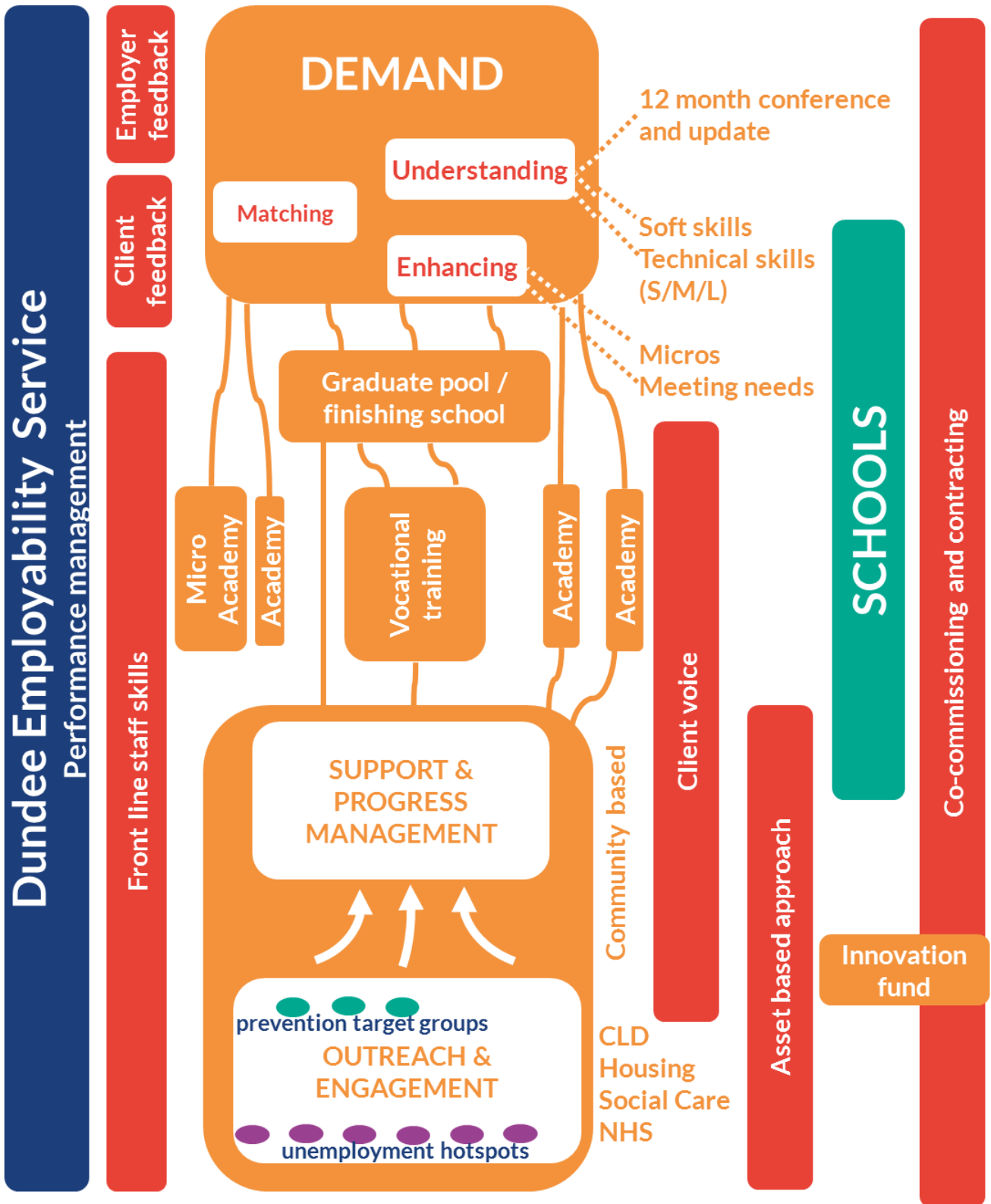
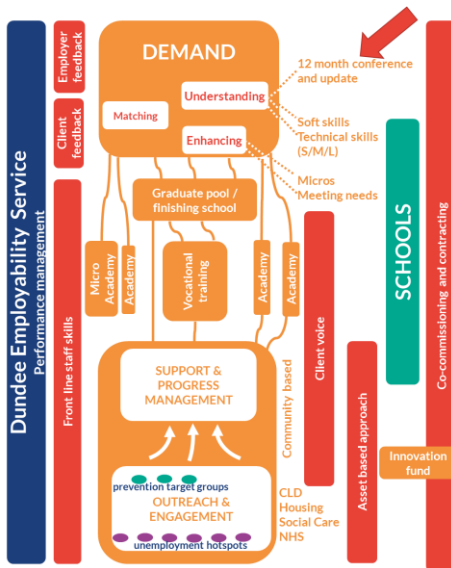


Figure 9: The proposed design of the 'Dundee Employability Service'

In the following pages we describe the areas for action in this service design.

Action 1: Transforming the quality and value of labour market intelligence



Action in this area will involve:

- Creating a shared source of practically useful intelligence and insight about short, medium and longer term requirements
- Ensuring the development of a shared **interpretation of the information and the practical implications of this.**
- Infusing the whole employability service (providers, College) and schools with this useable information which is robust enough to base decisions upon

The information will be drawn from:

- SDS Regional Skills Assessment and Skills Investment Plan
- Industrial Advisory Boards for sectors at Dundee and Angus College
- College destination returns
- DCC Labour Market Bulletin
- UKCES reports
- JCP vacancies
- SDI inward investment project requirements
- Planning/Building Control/Trading Standards/Licensing
- SE Account Managers
- Business Gateway advisers
- FSB/Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce
- Employer engagement staff (JCP, SDS, College, training providers)

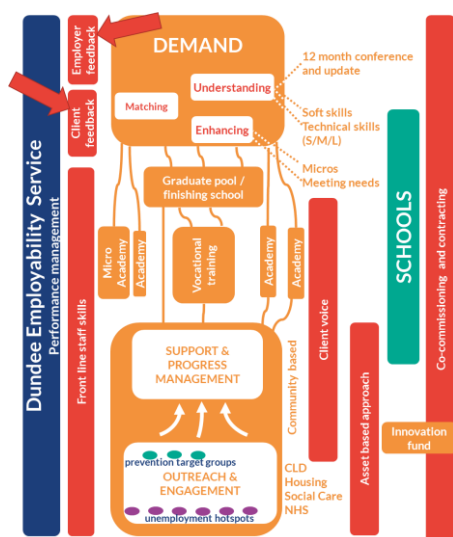
To bring together these hard and soft sources it is proposed that the partners will hold an annual workshop of LMI specialists and all those engaging with businesses. At this workshop participants will:

- Identifying current and emerging needs
- Explore the practical implications
- Agree on the reliability and robustness of the insights
- Identify areas for more detailed exploration
- Develop agreed summaries of useable information for:
 - Training providers
 - Guidance teachers, SDS IAG staff, pupils, parents
 - Personal advisers

The practical benefits of this will be:

- Improved decision making by pupils
- Improved match between advice/training and the market
- Improved match between recruits and employer needs
- Employers more confident of finding the right staff – more jobs?
- Greater likelihood of sustainability in work.

Action 2: Ensuring the quality of the whole service



To ensure that partners have regular insights into the quality and performance of the service as whole they will commission regular surveys of both employers and individual clients

The regular (6 months) independent surveys of employers will cover:

- The quality and responsiveness of service
- The quality and match of recruits
- The scope for improvement.

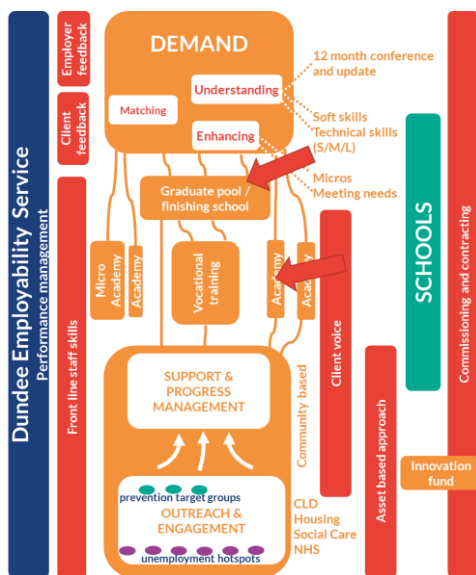
The regular (6 months) independent surveys of individual clients will include:

- The quality and responsiveness of service – did it understand and respond to your specific situation and needs?
- Did you agree a clear pathway for progress? Have you felt in charge of your progress?
- Have you had the support you need along the way?
- Have you gained a job which matches your skills and aspirations?

There will be a standing item every 6 months on the agenda of the Employability Group which will cover the following questions:

- What does this tell us about our progress in creating a clear, coherent and progressive service focusing on situation of the client and needs of employers?
- What is heading in the right direction and what do we need to take action on?
- What shall we do, who will do it and how will we check whether it is making the improvement we need?
- Are there any areas which require more detailed research? How shall we do this?

Action 3: Realising the growth and employment potential of micro-businesses



Following the publication of the FSB Report on realising the employment potential of micro-business in Scotland³ there are now a number of initiatives across Scotland which provide specialist HR support to help micro-business owners deal with all the risks and barriers they perceive as being involved in employing people.

This is important because micro-businesses form an important part of Dundee's employment mix (see Figure 10 overleaf – most businesses below 50 employees are micro-businesses).

³ Micros Untapped: Realising the employment potential of micro-businesses. Rocket Science for FSB Scotland 2012.

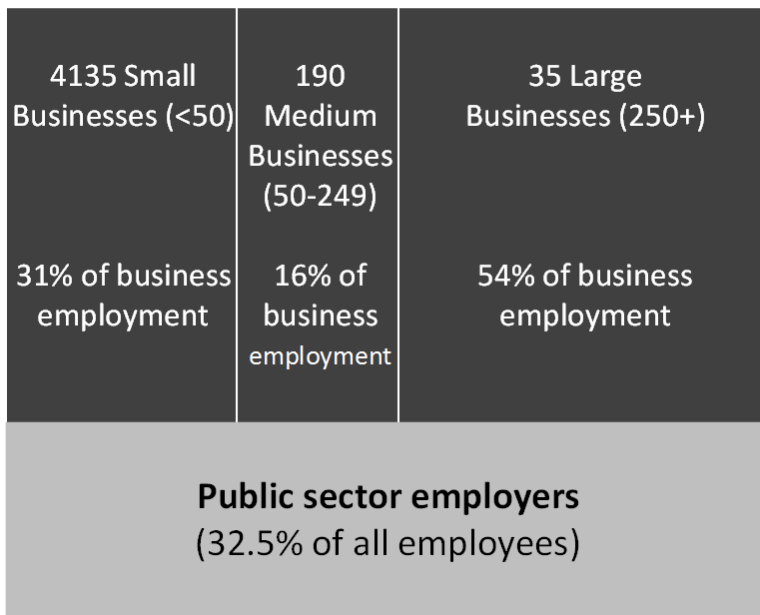


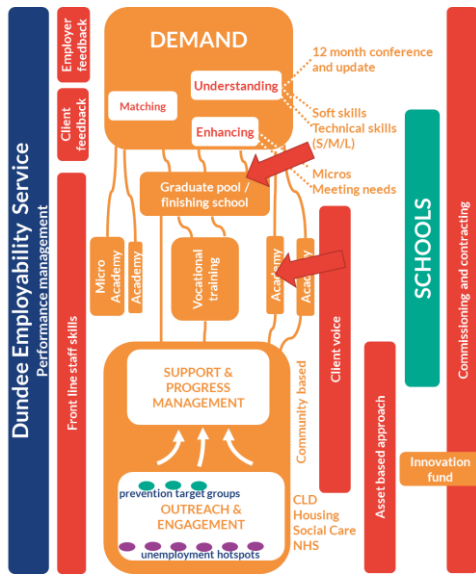
Figure 10: Distribution of employment in Dundee by sector and business size.

This area for action is made up of two proposals:

- To increase investment in HR support for micro-businesses to help them realise job creation potential and growth
- To design and pilot a micro-business academy with FSB/members to help clients gain the distinctive skills and behaviours that will help them thrive in a micro-business and contribute effectively:
 - Reliability
 - Team-work
 - Appreciation of demands on business leader
 - Flexibility and responsiveness
 - Range of skills.

The benefits from this action will be more growing micro-businesses and more of these recruiting previously unemployed people.

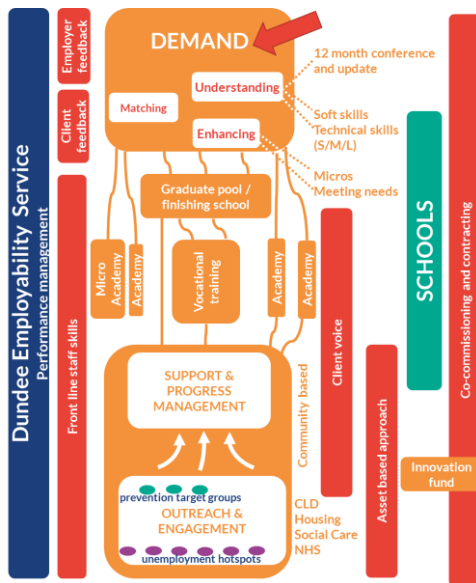
Action 4: Strengthening demand led training



There are two proposed actions in terms of demand led training

- To build on the academy approach and good practice in Dundee by:
 - Actively coordinating academy approaches across Dundee to create a more coherent, high quality approach with regular review and improvement of service design and delivery and a clear consistent offer for employers.
 - Building on existing good practice (eg the Health and Social Care Academy)
 - Developing clear and effective co-design processes with employers.
- The commissioning of an independent ‘finishing school’ which takes all work ready clients and tests for ‘job readiness’
 - Those graduating can be confidently recommended to employers
 - Those not graduating will receive detailed, supportive feedback and personalised development.

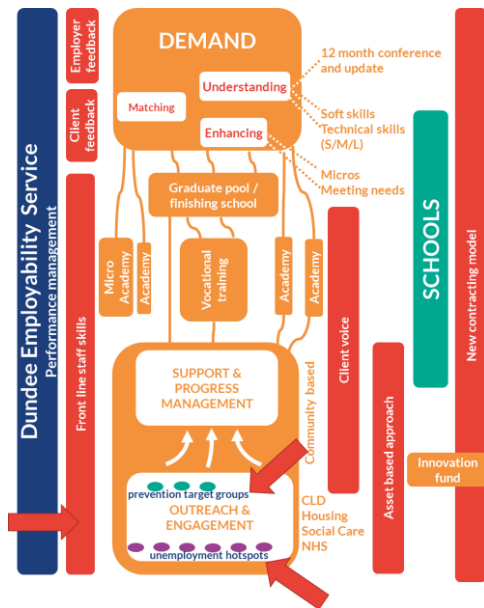
Action 5: Supporting progression in work



The partners will develop a two strand approach to helping people make progress in work to more secure, skilled and better paid jobs. This will involve:

- Working with business development staff to develop approaches to businesses in key employment sectors with a view to helping them enhance their productivity and competitiveness through staff development.
- Creating a career advancement service (potentially as part of a City Deal with DWP) which provides one to one support for people in work who wish to make progress to more secure and better paid work.

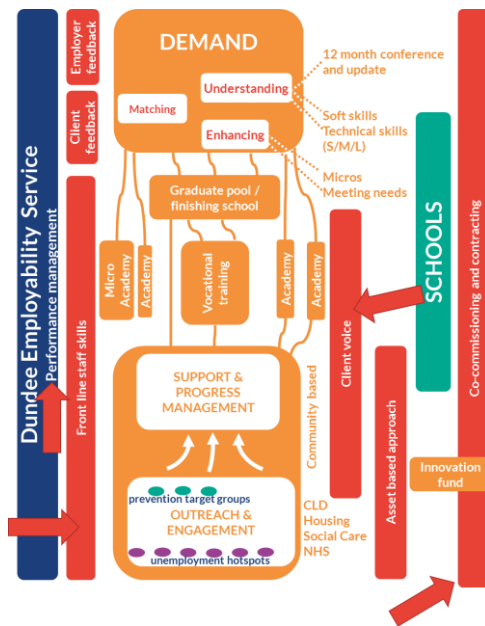
Action 6: Effective targeting of those furthest from work



The partners will develop a clear and agreed targeting of support. It is proposed that this will have three components:

- The coordination of Stage 1/2 services in areas of highest unemployment
- Building on current joint asset-based training to create shared team approach across local services
- Developing client targeting based on risk assessment – using evidence based tools to identify those particularly vulnerable to long term unemployment and following up with intensive support early in their experience of unemployment.
- Exploring opportunities to further enhance the scale and scope of volunteering, involving:
 - The creation of more structured and supported volunteering opportunities as a stepping stone to work
 - The development of volunteers as providers of peer to peer support within their communities.

Action 7: Client co-design of services

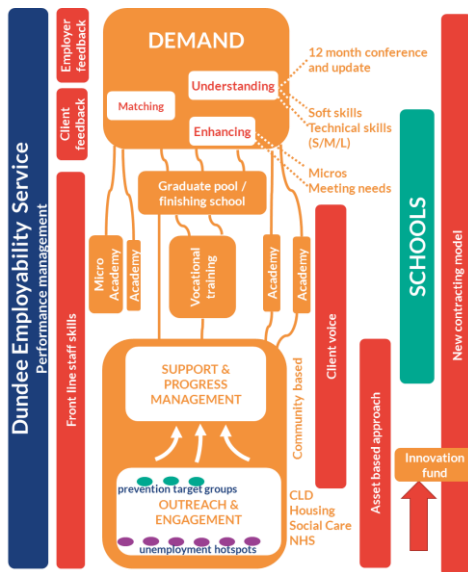


We have identified widespread support for the adoption of client co-design of services and we propose that this take a number of forms:

- Ensuring the client voice is drawn on in service design and delivery
 - This is an important part of the established asset-based approach and will provide clients with the opportunity to engage with service providers in an ‘expert’ role
 - This would apply to the design of the service as a whole, to the design of individual services within this and to the engagement with each client
 - Client voice approaches would be built into joint staff development to ensure that the client perspective was actively drawn on in refining and improving approaches.

Progress in the use of client voice could be checked using the regular client surveys.

Action 8: Innovation fund

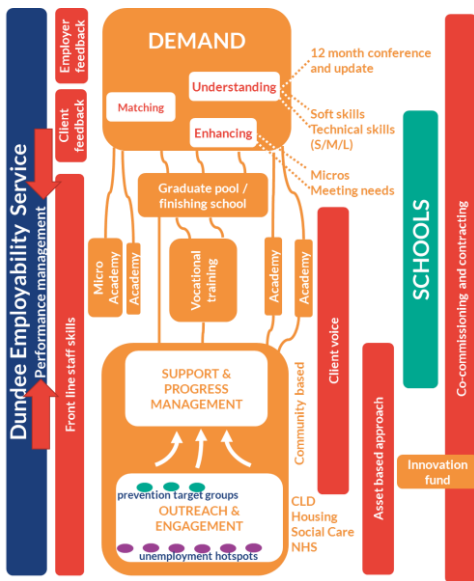


We recommend that the partners consider the role of a small innovation fund to promote the achievement of more sustainable, better (higher paid, more skilled), quicker outcomes. Applications would be invited from any provider and there would be an open brief – that is, applications will be encouraged from any party which has identified something worth trying that may deliver better or faster outcomes. There needs to be some evidence based offered to help partners assess the risk involved. Projects could be:

- Area focused, client focused, or sector focused – or a combination of these
- A technique or approach
- About working practices or service relationships.

Applications will need to involve a small, replicable pilot, which can be carefully monitored to maximise learning.

Action 9: Performance management



One of the most important conclusions from our work is the need for the Employability Group to focus on active performance management. This will be its main role and it will need to involve:

- Transparent reporting by partners:
 - What is working well? What is the scope to learn, apply, transfer, and expand?
 - What is not working well? How can this be improved? Should we stop doing it?
 - What do we need to know more about?
 - What should we take action on?
- The identification of areas of focus: Where should we drill down into issues and practice? This work could be done by selected short life working groups which would be commissioned to investigate and report back on recommended actions to improve performance to the Employability Group.
- Drawing on the regular Feedback analysis (from both employers and individual clients) to identify areas for improvement and appropriate action, timescales and accountability.

Practical action

The practical response to this new service design takes three main forms:

- Setting up six short life workstreams which will draw on local skills and experience and work to a brief produced by Rocket Science to design in detail the practical ways forward in ways that will be fully owned by all the relevant partners.
- Action by the Council to maximise its own employability footprint
- Action by the Council in its strategic leadership role.

In this section we set out the proposed way forward under each of these headings.

The six workstreams

The activities described above can be grouped into 6 workstreams. We are proposing that short life cross organisational workstreams be established to work to briefs that we will produce. They will be able to call on our support as needed, but the main purpose will be to develop highly practical action plans to take forward the action set out above and are widely owned by the partners.

Workstream	Relevant action	Lead partners
1: Labour Market Intelligence	Action 1: Transforming the quality and value of labour market intelligence	SDS, DCC, DWP/JCP, Business Gateway
2: Strengthening the demand led approach	Actions 3 Realising the employment potential of micro-businesses Action 4: Strengthening the demand led approach	DCC, Business Gateway, FSB
3. Integrating services for those furthest from work	Action 6: Effective targeting of those furthest from work Action 7: Client co-design of services	DCC, NHS, DWP/JCP

Workstream	Relevant action	Lead partners
4: Performance measurement, management and improvement	Action 2: Ensuring the quality of the whole service Action 8: Innovation Fund Action 9: Performance Management	DCC, SDS, NHS, DWP/JCP
5: Joint staff development	Action 2: Ensuring the quality of the whole service	DCC, NHS, SDS, DWP/JCP
6: Co-commissioning	Action 4: Strengthening the demand led approach	DCC, SDS, DWP/JCP
7: Supporting progression in work	Action 5: Supporting progression in work	DCC, Business Gateway, FSB, Chamber of Commerce, SE

Action by the Council to maximise its own employability footprint

As an explicit part of our brief, we are currently engaging with different service areas across the Council to understand the current Council footprint and identify the scope for further enhancing this. Other partners may have been through a similar process to ensure they are realising their potential in terms of their 'employability footprint'. Overall, our view is that the current footprint is commendable and ahead of many other Councils which we have reviewed. Working with staff we have identified scope for further action in four areas:

- The Council as an employer.** The Council is involved in providing a range of opportunities for young people, including MAs, work experience and the limited use of staff as mentors and there are a number of examples of good practice. There is a clear recognition that there is scope to do more in all these areas. However, we recommend that this should be taken forward on a much more significant scale as part of an initiative by a wide range of employers across Dundee, with strategic leadership being provided by the Council and with a specific focus on joint work with NHS Tayside. By taking it forward in this way it will provide a much wider range of opportunities, an array of pathways through the different types of experience that can be provided by a wider range of employers, and a more effective way of engaging with schools and the College.
- The Council as a provider of housing.** The Council holds a significant housing stock and many of the priority clients of an employability service are tenants of the Council. The housing service is thinking hard about ways of providing support to its tenants to help them make progress to and through work and have identified a number of areas for further development. There is scope to do more, particularly in terms of further

developing the role of housing officers and supporting tenants through their transition to work. In the next stage of our assignment we will be working with them to refine these ideas and develop some practical ways forward.

- **The Council as a provider of key services for priority clients.** The Council runs many of the services that support those furthest from work, in other words the services that are relevant at Stages 1 and 2 of the pipeline. We have heard from these services a consistent view that there is scope for greater local integration and the need for this to be supported by facilities which can support integrated service delivery. These services are not all owned by the Council, notably health services and some third sector provision, and there is a need for wider integration to meet the distinctive needs of different individuals, families and neighbourhoods. The main opportunities are to do with:
 - Joint staff training, particularly in terms of further strengthening and deepening the asset based approach
 - Improved systems of shared assessment, referral and progression management
 - The development of joint service centres
 - The development of skilled volunteers to provide the scale of one to one support needed.

Behind this lie a range of issues which need to be explored as part of this agenda: notably around the scope for helping individuals gain the insights and techniques to support their own progress – and how to draw on community based support and insights to help them on their journey.

- **The Council as a funder/commissioner of DCC/ESF supported services.** The Council faces some imminent decisions about the focus of Council/ESF supported services. The proposed service design provides a basis for this in terms of helping the Council identify:
 - Areas where there is a need to complement or supplement current services by others.
 - Areas which other funders are unable to fund because of the constraints around their funding.
 - Areas where current approaches appear to be working and which can be scaled up or rolled out.

The timing is not straightforward because during the current funding round an entirely new approach to Work Programme will be starting (in April 2017). Because of this there is some appeal in continuing the current funding pattern for a year. However, there does appear to be scope to develop a focus on:

- Those who are emerging from 2 years on Work Programme with no job, and particularly men over 50.
- Those who are identified as at risk of long term unemployment.
- The development of an 'academy' based approach targeted at micro-businesses.

The Council as a strategic leader

We have identified four areas where it is important for the Council to play a strategic leadership role:

- The service design that has been developed has important implications in terms of physical infrastructure and staffing. We have set out above both the significance of the trend for greater service integration and alignment and the implications this has for neighbourhood service centres. These will provide the base for much of the support for clients at Stage 1 and 2 of the pipeline. For those at Stage 3 and beyond, it will be important that the service is delivered close to where the main job opportunities are – as part of helping clients develop the skills and routines needed for them to gain and make progress in work. In a compact city like Dundee it makes sense therefore for Stage 1 and 2 services to be placed within neighbourhoods and Stage 3, 4 and 5 services to be provided close to work opportunities, so a city centre location makes sense for the latter range of services. Given the current pressure on a range of relevant providers there does seem to be scope for some ambitious thinking in terms of the co-location of Stage 3, 4 and 5 services in the city centre. Although the Wellgate JCP office is the largest in Scotland there is little or no scope for co-locating other services there. Given the pressures on the JCP estate we believe it would be worth discussing with DWP the scope to develop a new centre together with a range of related services, in particular those of SDS, relevant Council services and possibly with space for a range of training activities (eg the proposed ‘finishing school’).
- The development of a city wide approach to providing a range of opportunities and support for those seeking work. While it might be possible for the Council to, say, double the current number of MAs through its own employment, our view is that this would miss a larger opportunity. This would be to develop a much more widely owned approach among a range of city based employers and using this to create a wide range of different pathways which may involve two or more employers. The Council is well placed to provide the leadership to drive this initiative and in our next stage we will be articulating clearly the scope for this and what it could involve.
- The existence of two universities and a strong FE College provides the city with a great opportunity to draw on good practice elsewhere in terms of engagement both with schools and the most deprived communities to create new skills, confidence and aspirations. There may be scope, for example, to work with Glasgow Caledonian University who are working in a unique way with communities in North Glasgow as a supporter and service provider rather than just widening access to the University as a destination.

- Finally, there are some powerful new approaches being developed to data management through the holding of ‘personal data stores’ by individuals. This turns data management issues on their head – in other words, instead of individual data being held by service providers (eg by an array of employability, health and care services) it is held by the clients themselves and it is they who provide access to it by service providers. This transforms the problems around data sharing between organisations and would support, for example, common assessment and progress management approaches. DWP have created a framework for client focused data piloting and are committed to contributing their own data to this that NHS and a range of other services (including charities) are signed up to pilots in other areas. DWP are now keen to see one or two personal data pilots in Scotland and they are currently talking to Glasgow City Council about this. There is definitely scope to have a pilot in Dundee and this would be entirely consistent with the strong asset based approach that exists at Stage 1 and 2 in Dundee.

The opportunities provided by City Deal

The proposed City Deal being put together by the Council with adjacent Councils provides a vital opportunity to support the new service design by proposing some significant changes by DWP. Our discussions with and involvement in other City Deals and our awareness of the flexibility now being displayed by DWP suggests that there are three ‘asks’ of DWP that should be included in a City Deal proposal:

- The scope for JCP staff to become part of an ‘asset based’ approach. There have been a number of initiatives in the past which have enabled JCP advisers to become part of a wider service team and this has always resulted in an enhancement of their value to clients. Particularly at a time of heavy and often counter-productive use of sanctions it would be worthwhile to propose that JCP staff provide their support in a way which is consistent with the asset based approach, and become part of the joint service training around this approach.
- The development of a career progression service. This is already an explicit part of some other City Deal proposals and it is highly likely that a strong proposal for a dedicated one-to-one service to help those who have found work to make progress to higher skills and higher earnings would be supported.
- A more substantial form of intensive support for those emerging from Work Programme along the lines of the ‘Working Well’ approach being pioneered by Greater Manchester with DWP support.
- The development of a significant early identification effort to identify those newly unemployed or entering the labour market who are most at risk of long term unemployment and for whom early intensive support will be likely to at worst accelerate job finding and at best prevent long term unemployment with its associated personal and benefit costs. We are developing the detail of such an approach in our parallel assignment on the preventative agenda in employability in Dundee.

An aspiration to deliver a world class employability service

Our view is that, given the good practice that exists and the commitment to transform the quality of the service, it is entirely reasonable for the partners to aspire to deliver a service which is on a par with the world's best. A world class service would be characterised by:

- The availability of up to date, relevant and accurate insights into the current and emerging needs of employers, and all partners drawing on this to create support which provides clients with opportunities to match their skills, aptitudes and aspirations with real opportunities in the labour market.
- The existence of highly skilled and experienced staff working with those furthest from work to provide them with long term support along a bespoke pathway to and through work.
- The use of regular insights from providers and from employers and clients to identify the scope for improvement in service design and delivery and active responses to this to tackle any issues arising. Clients and employers would both provide evidence for their experience as being highly relevant, based on their specific needs and achieving their own objectives.
- The active management of the whole service by all the partners, leading to outcomes showing consistent improvement both in terms of work placements and progression to sustainable 'Fair Work' opportunities.

In the next stage of our work we will be developing this benchmark and how the current service matches up to it – and proposing some key indicators that the partnership can use to assess progress towards this world class status.